

# Reading Toolkit: Grade 7 Objective 2.A.6.a

Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Informational Text

Indicator 6. Read critically to evaluate informational text

Objective a. Analyze the extent to which the text fulfills the reading purpose

Assessment Limits:

Connections between the content of the text and the purpose for reading

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## Lesson Seeds

### Reading Grade 7 Objective 2.A.6.a

#### Activities

Students should preview an informational text. With a partner, students should identify a purpose for a close reading of the same text. After reading, student partners should complete a chart to determine if the text fulfilled their purpose for reading. Once the chart work is complete, students should share their findings with the rest of the class.

|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| Title of Text                  |
| Purpose for Reading            |
| Did the text meet the purpose? |
| Text Support                   |

As an extension, if the text does not fulfill the student's stated purpose, a determination can be made about what purpose is met.

The teacher will supply students with an informational text and three purposes that the text may fulfill. Students should be divided into three groups with each group being instructed to read the same text but with a different purpose in mind. After reading is complete, within the three groups, students should be paired. The pair of students should determine to what degree the text met the stated purpose and find text support to justify their answer. In full class discussion students should determine if all or none of the three given purposes were met, and if all three were met, to what degree did each fulfill the purpose for reading.

Prior to this activity, the teacher should make available several different types of informational texts. Students will work in small groups with each group receiving a different informational text. Each member within the group will receive the same text to read with the same specific purpose. After reading is complete, group members will discuss how effectively the text was organized to fulfill the purpose for reading. Group members can offer suggestions about additional features the author could have employed to boost the effectiveness of the text for the stated reading purpose. Each group will record their findings on a large sheet of newsprint detailing the title of the text, their recommendations, and reasons for those recommendations. Once each group's work is complete, the texts and its newsprint review will rotate among the groups. A class discussion that compares and contrasts the texts and their fulfillment of purpose culminates the activity.

Students should be paired for this activity. Ideally each pair of students should be given a different informational text and a stated purpose for reading the assigned text. The student partners should develop a plan to determine if the text meets the stated purpose for reading. At no point should the student partners actually read the text. Instead they should preview the text's features taking into account all possible leads to determining the fulfillment of purpose. For example, the student partners should note the title, any bold print, italicized print, boxed text, graphics etc...A sample student plan might look like the following...

To determine if \_\_\_\_\_ fulfills the purpose for reading I need to examine

| Feature | Notes |
|---------|-------|
| Title   |       |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Boxed Text |  |
| Drawings   |  |

Once the student partners have created a specific plan for their assigned text, the plans should be exchanged. Next the partners should follow the plan created for them to determine how well the text meets the stated purpose for reading. An exchange of completed plans and discussion about them between the two sets of partners should culminate this activity.

## Clarification

### Reading Grade 7 Indicator 2.A.6

To show proficiency of **critical evaluation of informational text**, a reader must form a number of judgments about a text. To begin this process a reader must preview the text and its features and combine that information with prior knowledge to set a purpose for reading. During and after reading, the evaluation of informational text requires a reader to **determine the content of the text, the role of text features, text elements that make that text a reliable source, the author's opinion, argument, or position, the effectiveness and purpose of the author's word choice, and the effectiveness of the author's style**. A full evaluation of an informational text requires attention to each of these elements.

To begin a critical evaluation of informational text, a reader must use prior knowledge and preview the text to establish a purpose for reading. Once a purpose is established, that is followed by a close reading of the text. Next, a reader must judge how well the text provides information for the stated purpose for reading. Then a critical reader should be able to verbalize or scribe an explanation or analysis of the text by focusing on specific sections of that text and detailing how that **information meets or does not meet a stated purpose for reading**.

If that purpose is not met, a critical reader should be able to **identify those pieces of information that are needed to fully construct meaning**. Additional information may include more details within the text, more text features, or adjustments to the organizational pattern or existing text features. To determine what is required for meaning, a critical reader should closely read the existing text and then assess the degree to which the text meets a reader's purpose. A reader should note particularly the organizational pattern of the text and see how well that pattern helps a reader construct meanings from important ideas in the text. Those gaps in information that make it difficult for a reader to construct meaning signal the types of additional information that are needed.

The **analysis of informational text for reliability** is an important aspect in the text's critical evaluation. A reader must first discern how much of the text is factual. Once the factual information is isolated, judgments about its accuracy are necessary. A reader should access information about the author and his/her credentials as a means of assessing the passage's reliability. Depending upon the subject of the text and how current the information is also a reliability factor. When available, a reader can access other texts on the same subject to see if there is a consistency in the information. Finally after looking at multiple texts on the same subject, a reader can determine if the initial text contains the same information as the subsequent texts or if the initial text presents information not contained in the others. A discrepancy in information could point to an inaccuracy in a text or to a more current source of information.

Once reliability has been established, a reader should carefully note elements of text that address the **author's argument or produce clarity of the author's position on the topic**. Additionally, a reader should be attuned to **elements of bias** in the author's presentation of material. After reading is complete, a reader must implicitly understand the stated or implied main idea of the text. From that basis of understanding, a reader should look at the construction of the author's argument, noting any evidence of bias in the argument and looking for a fair treatment of opposing views on the topic. At that juncture a reader should be able to judge the impartiality of the material or the inclination of the author to present a single view of the topic. Based on that text evidence, a reader can make a critical decision about the text's fullness or limits of use to him/herself.

After a reader knows how useful a text might be, a determination can be made about what **additional information could help a reader construct meaning from the text**. Active reading skills will allow a reader to note a stated or implied main idea in the text. Then a reader can identify additional information that would add to, clarify, or strengthen their understanding of the text or the author's viewpoint. A reader's suggestions for additional information could include, but not be limited to

- Text features such as bulleted lists, captions, graphics, italicized or bold print etc.
- Information to address readers' questions that were not answered in the text
- Context clues, footnotes, or glossed words to help a reader understand unfamiliar words and phrases

A critical evaluation of a text also demands that a reader detect **words that authors use to affect a reader's feelings**. A critical reader can determine a reason for the author's word choice and the response the author wished to evoke. At the center of any persuasive text is a strong opinion, and authors use words to their advantage to create a strong emotional appeal to a reader. Repetition, rhetorical questions, hyperbole etc...all have the power to sway a reader's perceptions. A critical reader is aware of the power of words and examines this word choice to discern the author's tone. For example, a critical reader should be able to discern the difference in tone between "The hero was brave as he flew into the battle alone." from "The pilot was foolhardy flying into battle without cover." A critical reader must also note the portion of text where repetitions occur and determine why an author would wish to draw attention to that portion of text. Critical readers are aware of these elements and should be able to determine if they enhance an author's viewpoint. Finally critical readers should isolate elements that are used purely for emotional appeal and are not supported by fact.

Ultimately a critical reader should be able to **analyze an author's style** which is how an author uses language to relay ideas. An author's particular style has a direct effect upon the meaning of a text. For example, authors may use formal language to convey the seriousness of material or informal language to address the entertainment value of a topic. Or an author may use an informal style with a serious topic to evoke a particular response and cause a critical reader to consider why an author would not match style to topic. That disconnect between style and topic has a critical effect upon construction of meaning. A critical reader should also note how the author forms and uses sentences. The constant use of long, involved sentences or short, choppy sentences or a combination of both can alert a reader to a variety of emphases within a text. An author might use this stylistic formula to draw attention to a particular idea or to diminish the effect of an idea. Using sentence fragments is another way authors can achieve those same effects. Finally a critical reader should be aware that how the author uses language, makes choices about words, and constructs sentences that are planned so that a critical reader can develop insight into the author's intended meaning of a text.